

but i run the scalding water anyway  
and lower my ignominy into it

and stare at a copy of a moveable feast,  
first one of the fitzgerald chapters  
and then the one about ezra pound's bel esprit movement  
to free major eliot from lloyd's bank,

and it is the paris to which i have been  
and about which i have written  
and to which, before the recent financial hiroshimas,  
i had hoped to introduce my children,

and suddenly, in spite of everything,  
i'm happy.

#### LETTERS AND SCIENCE

The brochure for the new course advertised it  
as a "Metrics Workshop."

Thank God, I sighed, at last I'll be getting  
a few students who can tell an iamb  
from something you use to hold a door open.

Naturally it turned out to be  
a matter of inches and centimeters.

#### THINK TINY AND CARRY A BIG STICK

tiny tim was on the johnny carson show the other night.  
it was obvious he had come down in the world,  
but the discernible aspects of his decline  
were not sufficient to account for  
the vehemence of the audience's reaction to him:  
they hooted and giggled and pointed and stomped  
like a bunch of midwest grammarschoolers  
at a carny sideshow.  
had there been any chance of their being  
allowed on stage,  
i really think they would have done  
serious physical harm to him.  
at the very least, they would have tweaked his nose,  
or pulled his hair

or pantsed him  
or given him the adolescently feared pinkbelly.

always the gentleman,  
johnny tried by example to convey to them  
how anyone of the least sophistication  
or compassion or good humor or good will  
might be expected to comport himself  
in the presence of a tiny tim,  
but he only succeeded in confusing them.  
they couldn't imagine why in the world  
he wasn't joining in the fun.

just ten years ago, responding to tiny tim  
was to a whole generation  
the touchstone of open-mindedness,  
of a liberation from puritanism,  
of live-and-let-live.

how far we've slipped back towards the slime.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA

#### DEAD AGAIN

Ben phoned and said, "there's a rumor going around that  
you're dead. HUSTLER magazine has gotten 3 or 4 calls  
about that.

"Well," I said, "maybe the dead can't tell, maybe I'm  
dead...."

5 years ago somebody started it:  
"Bukowski's dead."

Now it's beginning again.  
They want me dead very much.  
I seem to be very much on the minds of the  
death-wishers.  
It's irritating to some  
that a man nearing sixty  
continues to write.  
It should give them hope instead of  
rancor.

I'll die, my friends, I have no doubt of  
that